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Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 DHA-02 SSM-03 /082 W
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R 100947Z FEB 77
FM AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1972
INFO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
USUN NEW YORK 643

C O N F I D E N T I A L ABIDJAN 1390

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, IV, IS
SUBJ: HOUPHOUET - RABIN MEETING IN GENEVA

REF: (A) TEL AVIV 0873 (B) TEL AVIV 0888

1. DURING CALL ON MFA DIRECTOR OF POLITICAL AFFAIRS ANOMA KANIE FEBRUARY 8 EMBOFF RAISED SUBJECT OF HOUPHOUET -RABIN MEETING IN GENEVA. FYI KANIE WAS IVORY COAST AMBASSADOR TO ISRAEL FOR SEVEN YEARS UNTIL 1973 BREAK IN RELATIONS. END FYI.

2. KANIE SAID ANNOUNCEMENT OF MEETING HAD COME AS SURPRISE TO HIM AND OTHERS IN FOREIGN MINISTRY. HE NOTED THAT IN IVORY COAST IT WAS HOUPHOUET WHO PERSONALLY TOOK ALL THE MAJOR FOREIGN POLICY DECISIONS AND THIS OCCASIONALLY PLACED OTHERS IN A DIFFICULT POSITION AS AT PRESENT WHEN HE (KANIE) WAS RECEIVING PHONE CALLS FROM THE PRESS IN ISRAEL TO COMMENT ON THE MEETING.

3. SPEAKING ON A PERSONAL BASIS,KANIE SPECULATED THE MEETING WAS REFLECTION OF DESIRE WHICH HOUPHOUET HAS HAD FOR SEVERAL YEARS TO HELP IN PEACEMAKING IN MIDDLE EAST. HOUPHOUET BELIEVES THAT AS ELDER STATESMAN WHO HAS REMAINED FRIENDLY TO BOTH SIDES HE COULD HAVE "GOOD OFFICES" ROLE TO PLAY IN COMMUNICATING POSITIONS AND
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URGING DIALOGUE AND MODERATION. KANIE NOTED IN THIS REGARD VISIT TO HOUPHOUET OF PLO REPRESENTATIVE SARTAWI SEVERAL DAYS BEFORE RABIN MEETING. (GOIC MEDIA INDICATE MEETING WAS IN GENEVA ON JANUARY 27.)

4. IN HOUPHOUET'S VIEW, NEED TO SEEK PEACE NOW IS URGENT INASMUCH AS CONTINUED INSTABILITY LIKELY TO PRESENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR

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WIDENED COMMUNIST INFLUENCE. HOUPHOUET INCREASINGLY WORRIED IN WAKE OF ANGOLA ABOUT COMMUNIST PENETRATION OF AFRICA AS WELL AS MIDDLE EAST.

5. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION WHETHER HE FORESAW IVORY COAST RESUMING DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL, KANIE REPLIED PROBABLY NOT IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE. HE SAID MIDDLE EAST SITUATION WAS IN STATE OF FLUX AND 1977 LIKELY TO BE A CRITICAL YEAR, WITH RESUMPTION OF GENEVA TALKS PROBABLE. CONSIDERING HOUPHOUET'S CAUTIOUS APPROACH TO SUCH QUESTION, KANIE SAID HE WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY PREFER TO WAIT UNTIL DUST SETTLES BEFORE CONSIDERING RESUMPTION. IN LONGER RUN, HOWEVER, KANIE SAID RESUMPTION ALMOST A CERTAINTY AND THAT HOUPHOUET WOULD PROBABLY BRING SEVERAL OF HIS MODERATE FRIENDS TO TAKE A SIMILAR ACTION AT THE SAME TIME.

6. ASKED ABOUT THE GOIC POSITION ON THE MIDDLE EAST ISSUES, KANIE SAID THAT WHILE PRIVATELY SYMPATHETIC TO ISRAEL ON MANY POINTS, HOUPHOUET CONSIDERED THE RECOGNITION OF PALESTINIAN RIGHTS ESSENTIAL AND CREATION OF SOME FORM OF PALESTINIAN STATE INEVITABLE.

7. EMBASSY WILL ATTEMPT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT MEETING AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOLLOWING RETURN TO IVORY COAST OF HOUPHOUET NEW EXPECTED TOWARD END OF FEBRUARY.
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Message Attributes

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Disposition Approved on Date:
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Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
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Disposition Remarks:
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